

to this body, one which will guide me more than any other as I embark upon this exciting journey, and that is a steadfast commitment to the people of Maine. Whether it is fighting for Maine's fair share of Federal contracts, urging a business to expand and create jobs in our State, or helping a constituent navigate the bureaucratic maze in order to receive veterans' benefits, it will be service to the people of my State that will be my highest priority as Maine's newest Senator.

Just 1 year ago, I stood in Bangor, ME, with my family and my friends at my side, and announced my intention to seek a seat in the U.S. Senate. I told the people of Maine then that I would represent them with dignity and determination, with energy and enthusiasm. My approach will be simple and straightforward: I will listen to all points of view, I will engage in constructive dialog with my colleagues, I will compromise when compromise is warranted, but, after all is said and done, I will fight for those changes that will make the Federal Government better able to serve the people of Maine.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The acting majority leader.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I wish to compliment Senator COLLINS for an outstanding maiden speech, her first speech on the Senate floor. I think the speech speaks very well for itself and for Senator COLLINS. I think it also speaks very well for the State of Maine, in showing excellent taste, making an excellent decision in electing Senator COLLINS. I look forward to working with her and joining with her and with Senator SNOWE and following the tradition of Senator Margaret Chase Smith, who was one of the pioneers in the Senate.

I wish to compliment the Senator from Maine for an outstanding speech. Several of the things which she mentioned in her speech we have very high on our agenda. Senator COLLINS mentioned that she wanted to pass a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. We are going to be discussing that today, and hopefully we will be voting on that very soon, certainly by the end of this month.

Hopefully, we will pass it. I might mention, Senator COLLINS' election may well be the deciding vote in making that happen, because in the last Congress, we failed by one vote. So, again, every election is important.

I compliment the Senator from Maine for an outstanding speech and reassure her that I share many of her objectives. She mentioned reducing the inheritance tax to help small business. I couldn't agree more.

I compliment her on an outstanding speech and compliment the people of Maine for sending two outstanding Senators to serve and join us in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, what is the regular order? Are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business, and the Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

EDUCATION

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to speak a little bit about the issue of education, which was raised so aggressively by the President in his State of the Union Address last night. I congratulate him, once again, for focusing the country's attention on this critical concern. It is something that we, as a nation, have focused our energies on ever since we began, and many could argue that one of the really unique miracles of American society has been our educational system.

With each generation, we have asked ourselves, is our system working well, is it working right, is it producing individuals who are trained and capable of participating in the issues which their generation will face? In many instances, the answer has regrettably come back, no, maybe we aren't or we are not doing quite enough.

I, for example, remember that in 1980, we had the report of "A Nation at Risk," and that report identified as a country, because of our educational failings, we were falling behind, falling behind our sister nations in the industrial world in the area of educating our students and their capacity to compete, especially in areas such as science and math. So a major initiative was undertaken as a result of that.

Then when I was Governor of New Hampshire back in 1988, President Bush had just been elected, and he proclaimed that he would be the education President and gathered, for the first time, I believe—maybe it was the second time in history—all the Governors in one location for the purpose of taking on a one-item agenda. That was in Charlottesville, VA, and the issue was education.

At that time, Governor Clinton from Arkansas was, I believe, the chairman of the Governors conference and played a major role in identifying five major policies which would be the goals to get us to the year 2000 to improve our educational system.

One of those policies involved being a leader in the world by the year 2000, I believe it was—it might have been earlier—in the area of math and science education.

Now we have President Clinton coming forward and saying, again, and accurately so, that our educational system is not accomplishing what we need as a nation. It is not educating our children to the level that is necessary

for us, as a nation, to compete. And so we revisit the issue.

The question is, how do we revisit the issue? Do we learn from our mistakes of the past, or do we simply go forward with another new set of initiatives which may or may not accomplish our goals or may not accomplish more than what was accomplished in the last efforts. This is what I want to discuss, because I think the President, for all his energy and his enthusiasm and his rightly directed purpose, which is to improve education, has, to some degree, missed the point.

There are a lot of issues of education, but there are parts of education which work well, and one of the core parts of education that works well is the ability to keep the control over education at the local level. The essence of quality education, the formula for quality education is not a formula which says dollars equal better education. It is a formula that has variables in it, including dollars, including teachers, including principals, including school boards. But that formula doesn't necessarily have as a major function in it—we are talking now about secondary and elementary education—the Federal Government deciding the purposes, the roles, the curriculums of education. Rather, the essence of that formula is that the local community, the teachers, the parents, the principals, the school boards collaborate to produce quality education.

So the Federal role in education is narrow, because there could be nothing more disruptive or, in my opinion, nothing that would undermine education more fundamentally than to move the decision process out of the hands of the parents, out of the hands of the teachers, out of the hands of the principals to Washington. We would end up with a bureaucratic structure which would not respond to the needs of better education.

No, the Federal role is narrow. It should be focused, focused on places where it can make an impact, and that is what we tried to do or attempted to do. Sometimes we tried to go beyond that. Basically, that is what we tried to do. The Federal role has been, for example, in postsecondary education. The Federal role is significant, important, and appropriate in assisting students in being able to move on past their high school years to higher education, and the President's initiatives in this area are something that we want to look at because they could be a valuable addition.

The Federal role in the secondary school level has been really limited and focused to a couple of specific areas where we felt the Federal Government could play a major part—chapter 1, Head Start, and special needs students.

But now the President comes forward and lays out a whole brand new set of initiatives, new spending programs, \$43 billion in new programmatic activity, not pursuing programs that are on the books, but setting off on brandnew programs, and you have to ask yourself:

First, how many of those programs are appropriate to the Federal Government and, second, and even more important, is that the best use of those dollars, because there is something that is missing here.

At the local school level, the Federal Government has said you must educate the special needs child under Public Law 94-142. This was an excellent decision, that we require that the special needs child would be able to be educated in the least restrictive, most mainstreamed environment, and it has worked well. But when we passed that law, the Federal Government also said that we were going to be a partner in that education; that we, the Federal Government, because we were insisting that the local government undertake this role in the elementary and secondary schools, that we, the Federal Government, would pay for 40 percent of the cost of special education in this country. Today, the Federal Government doesn't pay for 40 percent of the cost of special education, it pays for approximately 6 percent, and the impact on the local school systems of the Federal Government not stepping forward and doing what it said it would do to assist in educating special needs students has been dramatic.

We have seen a shift in resources at the local level which has been arbitrarily created because of the Federal Government's failure to live up to its responsibility.

In the local schools in my State, for example, the local property taxpayer bears the burden of education primarily, and this is true throughout New England to a large degree, and many other States, I am sure. What happens is that because the Federal Government is unwilling to pay the 40 percent it said it would pay for a special needs student, the local property taxpayer has to pick up that 40 percent, or the difference between what the Federal Government is paying and what it said it would pay, which is about 34 percent.

That has meant that resources which might have been used for the average student, maybe to have an extra art class or an extra language class or an extra math class, or might have been used for the athletic program or for the cultural programs in the school system or might have simply been left with the local property taxpayers so that they could meet their mortgage payments more easily or their car payments more easily, that money is going to educate the special-needs student.

What we have created is a conflict, an inappropriate, unfair conflict, especially to the special-needs student, because what has happened is that in many communities where you have children who need special assistance, that special assistance is extremely expensive, and the parents of the students who are not special-needs students look at the parents of the students who are special-needs students and say, "Why is your son or daughter

getting \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 spent on their education annually when my son or daughter is only having \$3,000 or \$4,000 or \$5,000 spent on him or her?" "It's just not fair," they are saying.

So you have this conflict. And it is not right. There is no reason why that special-needs student should be separated out and find that they are looked upon in a jaundiced way by the community, by the other parents, and parents conflicting with parents, the school board conflicting with parents.

The only reason it is occurring is because the Federal Government has failed to live up to its obligations on this special education. We said we would pay 40 percent of the cost of special education, and instead we are paying 6 percent. That has created this conflict at the local level, which has placed the special needs student in a really unfair and inappropriate position.

You have to ask yourself, why do we do this? Why does the Federal Government do this? Well, it is called an unfunded mandate.

The first act of the Republican Congress 2 years ago was to pass a bill, which I helped author but which was really energized and driven by the Senator from Idaho, Senator KEMPTHORNE, which said we will not pass unfunded mandates any longer. Unfortunately, this one is already on the books. It is the largest unfunded mandate in the education arena; maybe outside of a couple of environmental unfunded mandates, the largest unfunded mandate in the country. It has had this really perverse effect, both of the tax burden on the local communities and the States, but, more importantly, the relationship between the students in a school system. And it is not right.

What we have said is we are going to correct this. We said it in the unfunded mandate language that we passed. More recently we made a commitment, as a Republican Senate anyway, to try to redress this. As we closed out the last budget year, we passed the omnibus appropriations bill. In that appropriations bill, at my suggestion, but with Senator LOTT's leadership, we put in \$780 million more into special education over what had originally been planned. It does not get us up to 40 percent. Maybe it got us up to 7 percent from 6 percent or 8 percent from 6 percent, but it was a downpayment. For example, in New Hampshire an extra \$3.5 million coming to special needs kids toward the Federal obligation. So we showed we were serious, as a Republican Congress.

Then to confirm and dot the "i" and cross the "t" and put the exclamation point in, we have introduced Senate bill 1. Senate bill 1 says that we, as a Republican Senate, commit ourselves to getting to full funding of the special education accounts in a 7-year period on a ramped-up basis, which means that this year we need to add additional moneys in the special education accounts.

Why does this all relate to the President's speech? It relates to the President's speech for this one very obvious reason. The President has proposed \$43 billion in new spending on education. We have not yet seen his budget to know where he is going to get this money. We do not know what accounts he is going to take the \$43 billion from. We have heard him say he is going to do this in the context of reaching a balanced budget by the year 2002, which is our goal and our purpose.

Taking that at face value, that he is going to have legitimate accounting mechanisms and have made hard decisions for the purposes of generating these dollars, it means that a large amount of new dollars is being reallocated from some other accounts into the education accounts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 3 minutes, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. That means the President is saying, let us spend another \$43 billion in education, new dollars on new programs. Well, how can he say that when we are not paying what we have already got on the books? That is the point.

How can we go out and put on the books new programs for building construction, which clearly is not a Federal role to begin with, new programs for a variety of different initiatives in education which may be only marginally in the role of the Federal Government, brand new programs, when we are not paying the cost of special education, when we are pitting the special-education students and their parents against the average students and parents in a school system, when we have created this horrendous situation in the local communities where the local school dollars are being drained off to pay for a Federal obligation because the Federal Government is not willing to step up to the bar and make its payment?

It is wrong. What we have done is wrong. Yet now we have the President suggesting a whole new group of expenditures in education.

I suggest, before we step down this road of new education initiatives, before we start building schools for school districts—something that is clearly not a Federal role—that we pay for what is a Federal role, and that we relieve this problem, and that we take out from over the head of the special-needs students the cloud that the Federal Government has failed to pay its fair share.

So I am just putting the Senate on record that I am going to work with the Senate leadership and other Senators who I know feel this way—and there are a lot of us here who feel this way because S. 1 is a consensus bill amongst Republican Senators—to make sure that, before we begin any

new education initiatives, we fund the one we have on the books, we fund the special-needs program, and we fund it appropriately.

So every amendment, every proposal that comes to this floor for a new education initiative will have with it, I assure you, an amendment which will say, special ed is our first obligation, the special-needs child is our first obligation. Let us look to that before we start a new program. Let us fulfill our obligations, before we start a new program, to the special-needs students and to the local taxpayer.

Mr. President, thank you for your courtesy and for the extra time. I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Wyoming, [Mr. THOMAS] or his designee, is recognized to speak for up to 60 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President. Let me assure you that I do not intend to talk for 60 minutes. However, we do intend to use some time as a special order today and will be doing this over a period of time to talk about issues that are important, I think, to the American people and that are important to this Congress, the issues that we now begin to deal with.

THE BUDGET

Mr. THOMAS. We are going to talk about the budget—not a new idea, but, I suspect, the most important issue that we have to talk about, because everything else, everything else that is discussed here, everything else that is decided here will be a function of doing something with the budget.

The Senator from New Hampshire, who just finished, talked about education and special education, which happens to be something that I am very interested in, but it is budgetary; it has to do with the budget.

The budget has to do with more than just arithmetic, more than just a balance sheet; it has to do with priorities, it has to do with fiscal responsibility for our kids, and our grandkids, it has to do with deciding what our direction will be in this country in terms of the Federal Government.

So, Mr. President, we want to talk about that this morning. I will be joined by several of my associates in the freshman and sophomore class who have come together to put a focus on events, and particularly a focus to try to talk about how what we do here with regard to the budget in this instance has to do with where we live, has to do with you and me in terms of our families, has to do with how we have the resources to send our kids to school and pay our bills. There is a direct relationship.

So let me yield 10 minutes to my friend, the new Senator from Arkansas, Senator HUTCHINSON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the Senator. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for the balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Senate Joint Resolution 1. I speak not only for myself, but I think I speak for thousands and thousands of Arkansas voters and their families who sent me to Washington with a primary goal of balancing the Federal budget and getting our books in order.

Arkansans, like most Americans, are hard-working, decent people with jobs and families facing constant pressure to make ends meet. Gathered around the kitchen table, these families, like so many others, pay their bills, attempt to budget for future expenses, and say no to the things they cannot afford. They act responsibly. Also, they act with the fear that a prolonged illness or unexpected job loss could push them over the edge, robbing them of financial security and destroying everything that they have worked for and saved. America's families have been forced to live within these limits. My question to the U.S. Senate is, can we ask any less of the Federal Government?

My colleagues, we carry a heavy burden. That burden is both the annual deficit that we caused and the debt that we have created. As of February 3 of this year, our national debt stood at over \$5 trillion. Whenever I hear these numbers I have to ask myself, what does that number mean, what does it mean to me, or better yet, how can we visualize numbers of this magnitude? Author David Schwartz has written a book entitled "How Much Is a Million?" It is a book to help parents explain large numbers to their children. Maybe it will help us as well. One of his examples says, "If a billion kids were to stand on each other to make a human tower, they would stand up past the moon. * * * If you stood a trillion kids on top of each other, they would pass beyond Mars and Jupiter * * * and almost as far as Saturn's rings." In another case he says, "If you wanted to count from one to one trillion * * * it would take you about 200,000 years."

Let me take a moment to put this kind of massive debt into perspective for those slightly older: \$5 trillion of debt translates into over \$19,000 for every man, every woman, and every child in America. That is practically equal to having an additional midsize car payment without having a vehicle. The debt of an average family is more than \$72,000. That could be the equivalent of owning a second residence without being able to stay there. For a family or person who owns a home, it amounts to an additional \$37,000 on average tacked on to their mortgage, without raising the value of their home. For many young adults who are taking advantage of student loans to obtain a better education, the national debt can ring up \$2,200 in additional costs on that loan. This significantly impacts the paycheck of the recent young college graduate who must make

larger than anticipated loan payments at an entry-level salary. For those persons trying to afford a new car, the national debt means the price of that car will go up another \$1,000.

At the conclusion of 1 hour of debate, the 60 minutes that Senator THOMAS has reserved, 1 hour of debate on this resolution, our country will owe roughly \$29 million more than it did when we started the debate.

Last night, the President advocated that we change the Constitution to protect victims rights, but he rejected and condemned the notion that we should amend the Constitution to ensure that our Government lives within its means. As if we were rewriting the Constitution to ensure a balanced budget, saying that is not a requirement, we should not do that. We have the authority; all we have to have is the discipline. I will sign it; you pass it. And yet in the same speech advocating that we change the Constitution to protect victims rights.

There are those who have said that a balanced budget amendment would wreck the economy. Well, business probably more than any other part of our economy has felt the effects of our huge national debt. Government has siphoned billions of dollars in investment capital, which, in turn, restricts our economy from reaching a higher growth potential. Deficits make businesses compete with Government for money, causing interest rates to be higher than they should be. With interest rates higher than necessary and private capital formation being stifled, it is quite possible to foresee lower living standards in the future, even in this time of slow growth we have experienced.

National growth rates of 2 to 3 percent simply are inadequate for America. Balancing the budget can mean an additional \$88.2 billion of capital investment in the first 7 years that we have a balanced budget. The less money being taken by Government, the more money that is available for economic development and job growth. Even more important, we have seen evidence that our debt and annual deficits have restrained the ability to make a better life for all of us.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported that deficits have kept our standard of living down by 5 percent. However, if we decide to make the choice to balance the budget by the year 2001, the General Accounting Office has stated it would lead to a 35-percent increase in the standard of living. Just think what that would mean in spending power to middle-class Americans. A balanced budget amendment will propel Congress to do what legislative remedies, with such words as "firewalls," "spending ceilings," and "lock boxes," what all of those statutory techniques have failed to accomplish since 1968. This measure will give the impetus to set goals and make priorities without budget gimmicks which have characterized the process over the